



# PCC News

Partners in Context & Community  
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## Director's Letter

by Bob Midden, Director,  
Partners in Context &  
Community, BGSU  
October 26, 2001

The purpose of education is to improve the human condition. Education is what we do to gather and convey our combined wisdom so that we can lead better, more enjoyable, happier and more satisfied lives. Education is therefore exactly what's needed most by those who most need to improve their lives.

That is the goal of PCC, to improve education where it is needed most, where lives are most in need of improvement. But therein lies the challenge. For where lives are most in need of improvement, education is most difficult. It is difficult, in part, because there is so much to change, so much to learn. It is also difficult, because difficult lives lead to difficult learning. But that is why this challenge is so stimulating – we have so much to gain.

Challenges can be daunting if there isn't good hope that the challenges can be met. But we have that hope. We have strong evidence that the plans that we have chosen can really lead to substantive and sustainable improvements. Contextual teaching and learning is well established to improve student engagement, motivation and understanding. And clearly when these three improve, student academic achievement will flourish. But the blind implementation of the principles of CTL is not enough. These must be applied in a flexible fashion attending to the environment and the culture of those who we want to learn. And that's exactly how we intend to apply CTL in the PCC project.

We already have signs of some success. Prof. Joyce Gromko has a group of students who demonstrated their musical proficiency on Tuesday, October 30, at Franklin School. Within a matter of weeks, students who until now were struggling

academically and who had little or no knowledge of music, have reached a point where they are capable of pleasing and impressing others with their music making.

We also have a number of BGSU faculty and East Toledo teachers who are gradually learning the practical aspects of the implementation of CTL in their classes. Courses are gradually being revised to become more contextual throughout the University and the schools.

We are on our way, our way is clear and our way is worthy. Let us continue with excitement, with high energy and with great enthusiasm.

Best Wishes,  
Bob Midden

## Student Profile

by Jennifer Marroquin  
BGSU Freshman

My name is Jennifer Marroquin. I was born and raised in Fremont, Ohio. I am the oldest of three girls. My parents have been married for 19 years. Our family is a very close-knit family. I have an enormous extended family. I am fluent in Spanish.

I attended Stamm School, grades K-6. I went on to Fremont Junior High School, which changed to Fremont Middle School my freshman year there. I graduated from Fremont Ross High School. I was involved in some school activities.

I was an athletic trainer for 3 years. I played volleyball my seventh grade and freshman year. I played co-ed softball this summer with a bunch of friends that I graduated with. We were horrible but it was fun. I was also apart of J.O.G (Jobs for Ohio's Graduates).

Bowling Green State University was the only college I applied to. I don't recommend that to anyone, but I was dead set on attending Bowling Green State University. If I wouldn't have gotten accepted I would have probably chose to go to Terra Community College in Fremont.

It was my dream to attend BGSU and when I found out I had

been accepted I was ecstatic. Then there was an opportunity for me to get involved in a new program, and I decided I couldn't pass this chance up, so I wrote an essay. Later I found out that I had been accepted to the P.C.C program. That was just an added bonus. I have been blessed in more ways than just one. I am grateful to all the people who reviewed my application and let me be a part of such a great program. I would like to say thank you and keep up the good job.



## Lunchbox

### Series

In the month of October, the second PCC lunchbox series presenter was Milt Hakel. He discussed e-portfolios, which the PCC Students will be working on throughout the year.

The next lunchbox series will be on November 28, 2001. Charlene Waggoner will be discussing the research project the PCC Students are taking part in.

If interested in attending, please RSVP to Susan Smith by phone 372-9443 or by e-mail at [slsmith@bgnet.bgsu.edu](mailto:slsmith@bgnet.bgsu.edu). Hope to see you there!

**“The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery.”**  
- Mark Van Doren

## Integrated Learning through CTL

by Robert G. Berns,  
Professor, Division  
of Teaching and  
Learning, BGSU

In the first issue, I introduced a new system for learning...at a distance. DiscoverCTL allows participants to learn *contextual teaching and learning*, a process in which students are actively engaged in the learning process as opposed to passively receiving information from a teacher, videotape, or other source.

Motivating students to reach their potential, CTL creates an environment in which students can find meaning in their classes—and connect the content of those classes to their lives...either now or in the future. However, for CTL to be effective, certain characteristics must be evident. During the next few issues, I will identify those characteristics, starting with a defining attribute: integrated learning.

### ***Integrated Learning***

For learning to be “real” to students, learning must be integrated. This holistic approach to learning connects concepts, principles, content and applications across various subjects. CTL provides this opportunity for students even though the focus of instruction may be on one particular subject. Teachers often collaborate to develop projects that result in learning content from two more subjects, process or life skills, higher-order thinking skills, and other applicable standards.

Through the integrated approach, CTL brings a real life perspective to the learning process while elevating the level of learning. Students discover that knowledge applies to multiple contexts and situations and not just one. Throughout the learning process, students make connections with their existing knowledge, past experiences, other elements of their current learning environment, and future possibilities (Berns and Erickson, *An Interactive Web-based Model for the Professional Development of Teachers in Contextual Teaching and Learning*. Bowling Green State University, 2001, <http://www.bgsu.edu/ctl>). How subjects connect with life’s many contexts (e.g., home, school, work, sports, hobby) can result in students retaining the knowledge longer and using the knowledge in meaningful ways.

### ***An Example***

An example might illustrate this point. In the fall, as the November elections draw near, seniors could be grouped by political lines, researching candidates, preparing platforms, and debating issues. The students could organize a debate to be presented to a parental group or other community organization. Through such a project, students gain knowledge of government, English, art, business, music, mathematics, and technology. At the same time, students learn problem-solving, decision-making, and creative thinking while preparing to become better citizens. Some may be inspired to study political science in college and/or enter politics as a career.

This integrated approach maybe planned, organized, and facilitated by one teacher or a team of teachers. Regardless of strategy, using the content of a variety of disciplines in a project such as this helps students realize the importance of the knowledge and helps them answer for themselves the pervasive question, “Why do I have to learn this?”